Students

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

The Colchester Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining safe and positive school climates that are free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. To that end, Colchester school employees are expected to model positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students, parents, guardians/caregivers, and staff and help to create a collaborative school atmosphere that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others.

Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district's commitment to addressing bullying behavior, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

In accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, and consistent with state and federal law, students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline and/or other appropriate interventions, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion,

Definitions of Bullying and Cyberbullying

For purposes of this policy, "**Bullying"** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

1) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;

2) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;

3) creates a hostile environment at school for such student;

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Definitions of Bullying and Cyberbullying continued

4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or

5) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

For purposes of this policy, **"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Potential OCR Violations

When bullying behavior targets a student based on a protected class, it may also be a violation of state and/or federal civil rights laws and must therefore also be investigated as a complaint as defined by federal legislation per the USDE Office for Civil Rights:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination based on disability in public entities.

I. Other Definitions

A. **"Electronic communication"** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system;

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Other Definitions continued

B. **"Hostile environment"** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

C. **"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;

D. **"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education;

E. **"Prevention and intervention strategy"** may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or another evidence-based model for safe school climate/bullying prevention, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

F. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on positive relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

G. "**School employee"** means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in

Other Definitions continued

a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

H. **"School-Sponsored Activity"** shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education.

II. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities

A. Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent shall appoint, from existing school district staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator ("Coordinator"). The Coordinator shall:

1. be responsible for implementing the district's Safe School Climate Plan ("Plan");

2. collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in district schools;

3. provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying;

4. meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.

B. Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school (or principal's designee) shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying in the school.

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III. School Employee Responsibilities

School employees who witness suspected acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying are required to to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report.

In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees should utilize opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying."

IV. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the Colchester Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy. As provided by state law, our Safe School Climate Plan:

(1) Enables students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and requires students and the parents/guardians/caregivers of students to be notified annually of the process by which students may make such reports;

(2) enables/assists the parents/guardians/caregivers of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;

(3) requires the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section;

(4) requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

(5) includes a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying;

(6) provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;

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Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan continued

(7) requires each school to notify the parents/guardians/caregivers of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents/guardians/caregivers of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;

(8) requires a school administrator to invite the parents/guardians/caregivers of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents/guardians/caregivers of the student against whom such act was directed to separate meetings to communicate to such parents/guardians/caregivers the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;

(9) establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;

(10) directs the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;

(11) prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;

(12) directs the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;

(13) requires the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;

(14) prohibits bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

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Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan continued

(15) requires, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and

(16) requires that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (7) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) includes a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

The Colchester Board of Education approved the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to this policy and submitted such plan to the Department of Education. The Board has made such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and will ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

Legal References:

Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*
Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145a
Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145o
Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-220a
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d
Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222g
Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222h
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Policy adopted: January 14, 2003
Policy revised: January 13, 2009
Policy revised: December 13, 2011

Colchester Public Schools
Colchester, CT

Colchester Public Schools Safe School Climate Plan

Introduction

There is a growing understanding that school climate is an integral component of the learning environment and essential for school improvement. Connecticut has defined school climate as "the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults." The National School Climate Standards provide a vision and framework for a positive and sustainable school climate. Through the implementation of appropriate prevention and intervention strategies the Colchester Public Schools will sustain school environments where all members are welcomed, supported and feel safe in school; socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. In response to the need to establish these positive school climates, the Board of Education has adopted the following Safe School Climate Plan.

Component	Actions	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy	Implement and enforce Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy which includes: • Student codes of conduct that are defined and prohibit bullying in accordance with state law. • A prohibition against bullying on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device. • A prohibition of bullying outside of the school setting if such bullying results in any of the following: (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. • A prohibition against any form of discrimination and retaliation directed toward an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is also strictly prohibited. • A prohibition against teen dating violence as defined as, "any act of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassment and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently or have	Superintendent of Schools School Administrators 	Ongoing

	recently been in a dating relationship."		
Notification Requirements	• Provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's Safe School Climate Plan. • Notify students and parents/guardians/caregivers of the process by which students may make reports of bullying. • Notify students and parents/guardians of the process by which students may make anonymous reports of bullying. • Educate students about the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy through developmentally appropriate discussions of the schools' behavioral expectations as specified in policy. • Educate parents/guardians/caregivers about the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy through a variety of communication vehicles including the digital backpack, open houses, PTO meetings, Community conversation/forums, etc. • Publish Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Safe School Climate Plan on the school and district's web sites and in the District Policy Handbook for parents/guardians/caregivers and student handbooks.	Safe School Climate District Coordinator Safe School Climate District Coordinator Safe School Climate District Coordinator, Specialists, and School Administrators School Administrators Teachers School Administrators Superintendent of Schools School principal	Annually Annually Ongoing Ongoing Annually Annually
Safe School Climate Committee	• Appoint District Safe School Climate Coordinator • Appoint Safe School Climate Specialists in each school • Establish Safe School Climate Committee in accordance with the law, including at least one parent/guardian/caregiver of a student at the school • Ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) serving on the Committee do not participate in any activities	Superintendent of Schools School Principals Safe School Climate District Coordinator and Safe School Climate Specialists	Annually Annually Annually

	which may compromise the confidentiality of any student.
	• Establish roles, responsibilities and procedures for Safe School Climate Committee including:
	  • Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;
	  • Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school;
	  • Review and make recommendations to amend school policies relating to bullying;
	  • Review and make recommendations to the district safe school climate coordinator regarding the district's safe school climate plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
	  • Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying;
	  • Collaborate with the district safe school climate coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying, in accordance with the law;
	  • Perform any other duties as determined by the school principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying for the school.
		Safe School Climate District Coordinator and Safe School Climate Specialists
		
		Safe School Climate Specialists
			Ongoing
			
			Ongoing

Prevention and Intervention Strategy	• Identify effective evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. Strategies may include, but are not limited to the following:
	  o Implement a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based curriculum for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying
	  o Make students aware of school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establish appropriate consequences for those who engage in such
		Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Safe School Climate District Coordinator and Safe School Climate Specialists
		
		Identified teachers
		
		School Administrators and Teachers
			Ongoing
			
			Ongoing
			
			Ongoing

	acts; o Provide adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, the bus, and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur; o Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school; o Individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees; o School-wide training related to safe school climate, to include relevant training in Title IX/Sexual harassment, Section 504/ADA, and cultural diversity. o Student peer training, education and support, including advocacy for victims o Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions. o Training in prevention, identification and response to teen dating violence for school employees. • Implement the evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies identified by the Safe School Climate Committee	School Administrators and School Employees Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Identified Teachers Safe School Climate Specialists and School Administrators Director of Curriculum and Instruction/School Principals Safe School Climate Specialists Safe School Climate Specialists and School Administrators School Administrators Identified School Employees	Ongoing Ongoing Annual Ongoing Ongoing, as indicated As determined by Committee

Assessment of School Climate	• Complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments including surveys, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education for each school • Submit assessment results for each school in the district to the State Department of Education • Review and analyze data obtained from climate surveys/ make necessary modifications to the district plan • Compare and contrast survey results with the National School Climate Standards and best practices • Meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during each school year to discuss issues related to school climate/bullying and make recommendations to BOE Policy Committee concerning revisions to the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and/or Safe School Climate Plan	Safe School Climate Committee Safe School Climate District Coordinator Safe School Climate Committee Safe School Climate Committee District Safe School Climate Coordinator	Biennially thereafter, Biennially Ongoing Ongoing Two times per school year

Training	• Provide all certified school employees training on the prevention, identification and response to bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. The training will be provided to teachers, administrators and pupil personnel who hold the initial educator, provisional educator or professional educator certificate via in-service training.	Safe School Climate District Coordinator and Specialists	Annually
	• Provide all other school employees training provided by the State Department of Education.	CSDE with Safe School Climate District Coordinator and Specialists	Annually
	• Provide annual notice to students and parents/guardians/caregivers of the process by which bullying reports are made	School Principal	Annually
	• Ensure the inclusion of language in student discipline policy concerning bullying as posted in District Parent Policy Manual	Superintendent of Schools Board of Education	Annually
	• Provide all school employees with written or electronic copy of school district's safe school climate plan	Superintendent of Schools	Annually at beginning of school year
	• Require that all school employees and bus drivers annual complete training on the identification, prevention, and response to bullying as required by law	Director of Curriculum and Instruction/School Principals Transportation Coordinator	Annually

Reporting Procedures	• Orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or school Administrator after being witness to acts of bullying or receiving reports of bullying • File a written report with the Safe School Climate Specialist after being witness to acts of bullying or receiving reports of bullying • Any student who believes s/he has been the victim of bullying/cyberbullying or who has witnessed bullying behavior should report the matter to any school employee, either in writing or anonymously. • Parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) may file written reports of Suspected bullying/cyberbullying. • Report acts of bullying that may constitute a criminal offense to appropriate law enforcement	All school employees All school employees All Students All Parents/Guardians/Caregivers School administrator	Within one school day after witnessing/receiving report Within two school days of oral notification Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Investigation	• Develop and disseminate investigation procedures for use by safe school climate specialists. • Investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. • Review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. • Determine whether the alleged conduct occurred & whether such conduct constitutes bullying as defined in the district policy. • Investigate bullying incidents that raise concerns about discrimination or harassment on basis of legally protected classifications	Safe School Climate District Coordinator Safe School Climate Specialists/School Administrators Safe School Climate Specialists/School Administrators Safe School Climate Specialists/School Administrators School administrators refer	Annually Promptly Promptly Upon completion of investigation As indicated

	• Notify the parents/caregivers of the victim and the parents/caregivers of the student alleged to have committed acts of bullying that an investigation has commenced.	investigations to Director of Pupil Services School Administrators	Promptly
Response to Verified Acts of Bullying	• Take prompt corrective action that is reasonably calculated to stop the bullying and prevent any recurrence of such behavior, if it is determined that bullying has occurred.	Safe School Climate Specialists/School Administrators	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	• Notify the parents/guardians/caregivers of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed. This notification shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts, with care taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of others students, including the perpetrator. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian/caregiver's own child may not be disclosed except as provided by law.	School Administrators	48 hours after the completion of the investigation
	• Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) of students who engage in any verified acts of bullying after the completion of the investigation to a meeting at which the following will be shared: 1. A description of the verified act(s). 2. A description of the school's interventions in response to the act(s). 3. Consequences, as appropriate	School Administrator	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	• Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) of any student against whom an act of bullying was verified after the completion of the investigation at which the following information will be shared: 1. A description of the verified act(s). 2. A description of the school's interventions designed to keep the student safe & prevent any further acts of bullying. 3. The content of the student safety support plan.	School Administrator	Upon determination that bullying has occurred

	Except in rare circumstances, such meetings with parents and guardians should be held separately. • Develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. The plan shall address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying. • Develop case-by-case interventions to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline.	Safe School Climate Specialists/School Administrators Safe School Climate Specialists/School Administrators	Upon determination that bullying has occurred Upon determination that bullying has occurred
Documentation and Record Keeping	• Establish a procedure for each school to: o Document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in the school. o Maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and make such list available for public inspection. This public list must not contain any personally identifiable information about any student or information that might reasonably lead to the identification of any student. • Report the number of verified acts of bullying in the district's schools to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education	Safe School Climate District Coordinator & Specialists Safe School Climate District Coordinator	July 1, 2012 Annually based on timeline established by CSDE

Regulation adopted: March 11, 2003
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Regulation revised: December 9, 2014

Colchester Public Schools
Colchester, CT